

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 153.**

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**153. . Mrs L F Tito (EFF) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

***[Interdepartmentally transferred from Minister of Justice and Correctional Services with effect Friday, 10 February 2023]***

What (a) measures have been put in place by her department to tackle the challenge of bullying in schools, which is costing lives and causing learners to drop out of schools and (b) are the current statistics of bullying in schools in the Republic?

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#### Response

**What (a) measures have been put in place by her department to tackle the challenge of bullying in schools, which is costing lives and causing learners to drop out of schools?**

1. The Department has trained schools on the implementation of the **National School Safety Framework (NSSF)** which is the sector's guiding framework for school and assists school to manage and respond to violent incidences in schools including bullying. The NSSF empowers schools to identify and manage all safety requirements and to mitigate against threats faced in a school. The NSSF requires every school to establish a school safety committee which is comprised of stakeholders such as teachers, police officers, school governing body members, learner representative council members amongst others. Furthermore, The NSSF also empowers schools to develop incident reporting mechanisms, establish collaborations with external stakeholders such as the South African Police Service (SAPS), the Department of Social Development and civil society organisations, as well as develop school safety plans and policies to respond effectively to all the safety needs and challenges.

2. The Department also requires schools to **develop and implement anti-bullying policies**, in line with the schools' **codes of conduct**. These policies define bullying and explains the different types of bullying (e.g physical, verbal, non-verbal, cyber, gender-based, etc.) so that the behaviours are recognisable; the policies make explicit the disciplinary procedures to be undertaken once an incidence is reported and the sanctions which will be undertaken against the perpetrators.

3. The Department and its partner Departments: Social Development, Justice and Constitutional Development, Correctional Services, the South African Police Service and the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies have embarked on an **Inter-Departmental Campaign on the Prevention of Violence, Bullying, Corporal Punishment, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Learner Pregnancy, Alcohol and Drug Abuse**. This Campaign raises awareness on the importance of tackling these social ills and raises awareness of the negative effects they have on teaching and learning in

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schools and on learners self esteem. The Campaign has been championed by the Deputy Minister of Basic Education and is supported by other Deputy Ministers from the partner Departments. It targets districts and schools with high prevalence of violence in provinces. To date, the Campaign has been rolled out in five provinces: Gauteng (Gauteng West District), Limpopo (Sekhukhune East District), Mpumalanga (Nkangala District) and the North West (Dr Kenneth Kaunda District). The next Campaign is scheduled to take place in the Eastern Cape, Nelson Mandela Bay District in March 2023.

4. The Department through the Life Orientation Curricular covers bullying in detail and how to prevent it. The Department has prepared lesson sets for the delivery of these topics. Understanding peaceful approaches to conflict management are also covered systematically across the grades. The Life Orientation Curricular further encourages learner agency, which is important as it encourages learners to stand up for the values and rights enshrined in the Constitution.

#### **Are there current statistics of bullying in schools in the Republic?**

5. Yes. The statistics on bullying is routinely collected through Statistics South Africa and TIMMS.